

## FIREWISE CONSTRUCTION

To create your FIREWISE structure, remember that the primary goals are fuel and exposure reduction.

- ✓ Use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible whenever possible.
- ✓ Use shingles such as Class-A asphalt, slate or clay tile, metal, or cement and concrete products for roof construction.
- ✓ Construct a fire-resistant sub-roof for added protection.
- ✓ Use fire resistant materials, such as stucco or masonry, for exterior walls. These products are much better than vinyl, which can soften and melt.
- ✓ Consider both size and materials for windows; smaller panes hold up better in their frames than larger ones. Double pane glass and tempered glass are more effective than single pane glass; plastic skylights can melt.
- ✓ Prevent sparks from entering your home through vents, by covering exterior attic and crawl space vents with wire mesh no larger than  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch.
- ✓ Keep your gutters, eaves and roof clear of leaves and other debris.

**Any structure attached to the house, such as decks, porches, fences and sheds, should be considered part of the house. These structures can act as fuses or fuel bridges, particularly if constructed from flammable materials. Therefore, consider the following:**

- ✓ If you wish to attach an all-wood fence to your home, use masonry or metal as a protective barrier between the fence and house.
- ✓ Use non-flammable metal when constructing a trellis and cover with high-moisture, fire-resistant vegetation.
- ✓ Prevent combustible materials and debris from accumulating beneath decks or elevated porches; screen underneath or box in areas below the deck or porch with wire mesh no larger than  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch.

For additional information, visit  
[www.firewisevirginia.org](http://www.firewisevirginia.org)

## IS YOUR HOME FIREWISE?

Firefighters need your help. Use these tips to **PREPARE** your home and **PROTECT** your family and pets. Take action now to make your home safer from the effects of a destructive wildfire.



Did You Know?

### The Top Three Causes of Wildfires in Virginia:

- ✓ Escaped Debris Burning
- ✓ Arson
- ✓ Equipment Use

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THESE WEB SITES:

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY**  
Firewise Program – [www.firewisevirginia.org](http://www.firewisevirginia.org)  
Agency Web Site – [www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT**  
[www.vaemergency.com](http://www.vaemergency.com)

**NATIONAL FIREWISE ORGANIZATION**  
[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

**USDA FOREST SERVICE**  
[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)



**Virginia  
Department of Forestry**  
Central Office  
900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)  
Phone: (434) 977-6555  
Fax: (434) 296-2369

VDOF P00111; 03/2005

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## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

### FOR VIRGINIA



**REDUCE THE  
RISK TO  
YOUR  
HOME !**

**Virginia Department of Forestry**

## FIREWISE LANDSCAPING

To create a landscape that will make your home less vulnerable to wildfire, the primary goal is fuel modification. Think of the area around your home in zones. Zone 1 is closest to the structure, Zone 4 is the farthest away.

- Zone 1** This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 feet on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plants should be limited to carefully spaced fire resistant tree and shrub species.
- Zone 2** Fire resistant plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing, and the irrigation system should extend into this section.
- Zone 3** Place low-growing plants and well-spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation (fuel) low.
- Zone 4** This farthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Thin selectively here and remove highly flammable vegetation.

### Also remember to:

- ✓ Carefully space the trees and shrubs you plant.
- ✓ Take out the "ladder fuels" - vegetation that serves as a link between grass and tree tops. These fuels can carry fire from vegetation to a structure or from a structure to vegetation.

### When maintaining a landscape:

- ✓ Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Prune all trees 6 to 12 feet from the ground.
- ✓ Maintain your lawn and water regularly.
- ✓ Mow dry grass and weeds.
- ✓ Dispose of cuttings and debris properly.
- ✓ Clear dead wood and dense vegetation within at least 30 feet of your house, and move firewood away from your house or attachments, such as fences or decks.
- ✓ Landscape with less-flammable plants: Azalea, Viburnum, Crepe Myrtle, Spirea, Hydrangea, Annual and Perennial Flowers, Ferns, Dogwood, Redbud, Red Maple and Oak.



Do you have at least 30 feet of space surrounding your home that is **Lean, Clean and Green**?

The objective of defensible space is to reduce the wildfire threat to your home by changing the characteristics of the flammable vegetation.

**Lean** - Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches, especially within 15 feet of your chimney.

**Clean** - Remove all dead plant material from around your home; this includes dead leaves, dry vegetation and even stacked firewood

**Green** - Plant fire-resistant vegetation that is healthy and green throughout the year.



**Defensible space provides a safety zone around your home and allows firefighters room to put out fires.**

## FIRE-RESISTANT ATTACHMENTS

Attachments include any structure connected to your home, such as decks, porches or fences. If an attachment to a home is *not* fire-resistant, then the home as a whole is *not* firewise.

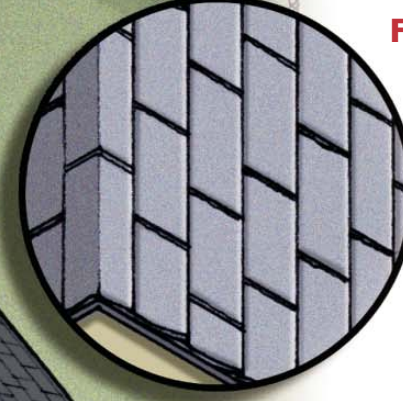
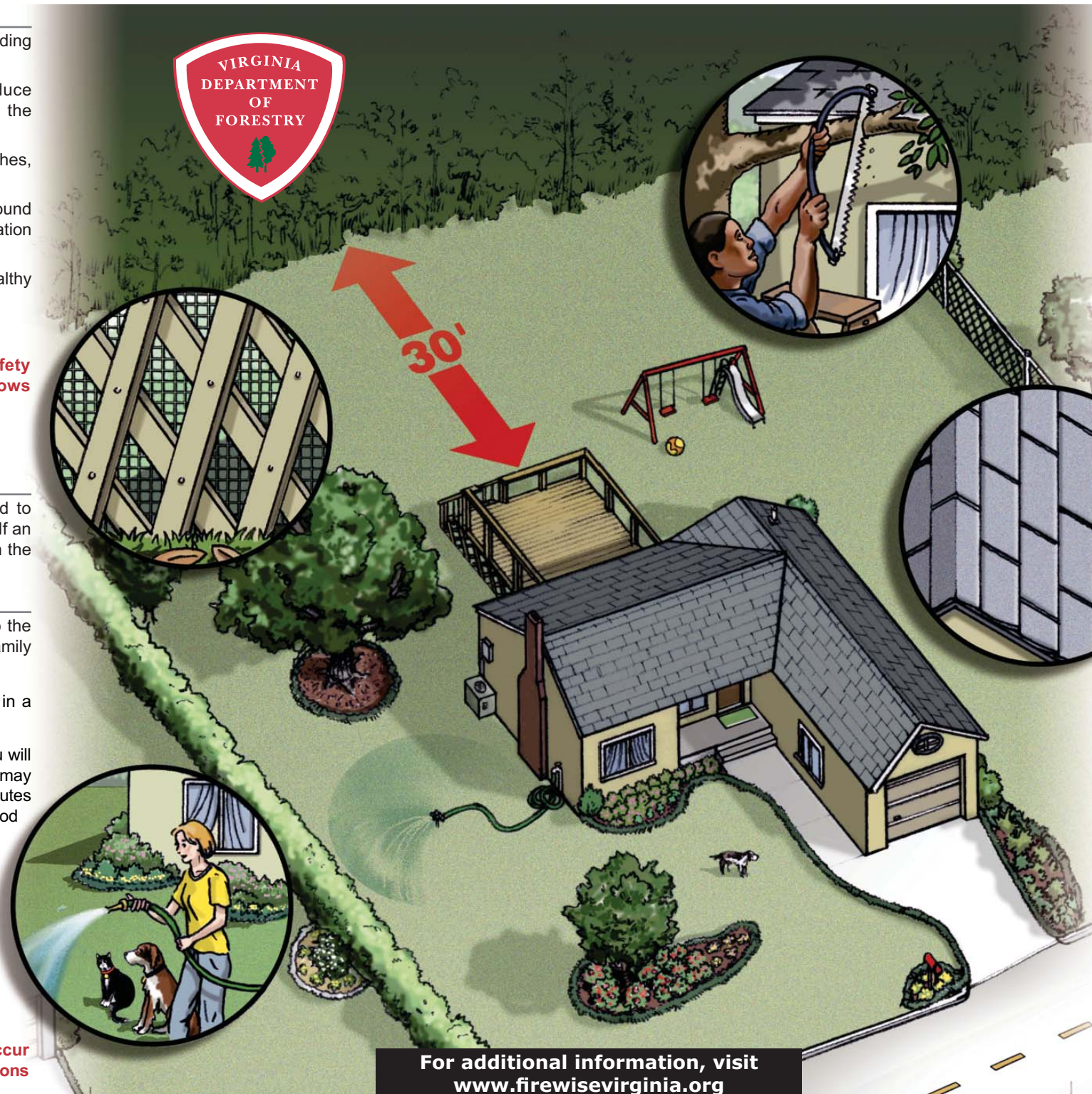
## A DISASTER PLAN

The time to plan for any emergency is prior to the event. Take a few minutes to discuss with your family what actions you will take.

- ✓ Post local emergency telephone numbers in a visible place.
- ✓ Leave before it's too late. Decide where you will go and how you will get there. With fire, you may have only a moment's notice. Two escape routes out of your home and out of your neighborhood are preferable.
- ✓ Have tools available: shovel, rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw.
- ✓ Maintain an emergency water source.
- ✓ Have a plan for your pets.
- ✓ Practice family fire drills.



**Evacuations for a wildfire can occur without notice; when wildfire conditions exist, be ready to take action.**



## LEAN, CLEAN AND GREEN LANDSCAPING

With firewise landscaping, you can create defensible space around your home that reduces your wildfire threat. Large trees should be pruned so that the lowest branches are at least 6 to 10 feet high to prevent a fire on the ground from spreading up to the tree tops. Within the defensible space, remove flammable plants that contain resins, oils and waxes that burn readily: ornamental junipers, hollies, red cedar, and young pine. A list of less-flammable plants can be obtained from your local state forester or the Firewise Virginia Web site.



Although mulch helps retain soil moisture, when dry, it can become flammable. Mulch, as well as all landscaping, should be kept well watered to prevent it from becoming fire fuel.

## FIRE-RESISTANT ROOF CONSTRUCTION

Firewise construction materials include Class-A asphalt shingles, metal, tile and concrete products. Additionally, the inclusion of a fire-resistant sub-roof adds protection.

**Something as simple as making sure that your gutters, eaves and roof are clear of debris will reduce your fire threat.**

## FIRE-RESISTANT EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION

Wall materials that resist heat and flames include brick, cement, plaster, stucco and concrete masonry. Tempered and double pane glass windows can make a home more resistant to wildfire heat and flames.

**Although some vinyl will not burn, some vinyl soffits can melt, allowing embers into the attic space.**

## EMERGENCY ACCESS

Identify your home and neighborhood with legible and clearly marked street names and numbers so response vehicles can rapidly find the location of the emergency. Include a driveway that is at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet - to provide access to emergency vehicles.